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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/700,116	11/03/2003	Larry J. Whitener	21447-00001	5114

7590 04/19/2006
John S. Beulick
Armstrong Teasdale LLP
Suite 2600
One Metropolitan Square
St. Louis, MO 63102

EXAMINER

DONELS, JEFFREY

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2837

DATE MAILED: 04/19/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/700,116

Applicant(s)

WHITENER ET AL.

Examiner

Jeffrey Donels

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– The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address –
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM
THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2006.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevenson (USP 6737570).

Stevenson discloses an interactive personal audio device which comprises a microphone 70, music generation device 70, processing unit 45, and headphones 46. Applicant has amended the claims by adding the limitation of "a user interface ... configured to control the output signal of said processing unit by altering the amplification of at least one of the first and second input signals" and argues that Stevenson does not teach this limitation. In the art of musical instruments and audio electronics, this is commonly known as 'audio mixing.' However, Stevenson does in fact teach such mixing control. "Generated sounds from the sound generator 43 may then be mixed in a mixer 45 with the output from a digital to analog converter (DAC) 44a. Conventionally, the output from the DAC 44a may be the audio being played by an on-board audio player 70 or from the processor 38. The mixer 45 mixes the generated sounds, *developed in response to operator 40 inputs*, with an ongoing digital audio source from the DAC 44a or with an ongoing analog audio source 71. The mixer 45 outputs the mixed audio through an output buffer amplifier to

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drive the headphones 46 or an audio line level output 53, in one embodiment.” (Col. 3 lines 59-67) Stevenson then goes on to further state (Col. 4 lines 32-35) “Each of the operators 40 may be user programmable, in one embodiment, with a user selected sound or effect being generated in response to actuation of the operator 40.”

Stevenson does not explicitly teach a headset comprising a microphone and a headphone in combination with the other elements. Official Notice is taken that the use of a headset, which comprises a microphone and a headphone, in combination with audio equipment or musical instruments is notoriously old and well-known in the art of audio equipment. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to adapt the teachings of Stevenson with such headset teachings, so as to allow the user the ability to have a hands-free musical performance.

Regarding Claims 7 and 13, Stevenson (applied here in a similar manner as above) discloses all features recited, but does not explicitly disclose the second microphone / receiving the third audio input as recited. It has been held that the mere duplication of working parts does not constitute nonobviousness (*In re Harza*, 274 F.2d 669, 124 USPQ 378 (CCPA 1960)). It would have been obvious to modify the teachings of Stevenson accordingly, so as to allow for more simultaneous users of the Stevenson device.

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ng (USP 6328570).

Ng discloses a portable karaoke unit which comprises a microphone 144, music generation device 210, processing unit 250, and headphones. Applicant has amended the claims by adding the limitation of "a user interface ... configured to control the output signal of said processing unit by altering the amplification of at least one of the first and second input signals" and argues that Ng does not teach this limitation. In the art of musical instruments and audio electronics, this is commonly known as 'audio mixing.' However, Ng does in fact teach such mixing control. "Effects generator 250 receives voice data from the microphones and incorporates sound effects such as echo, reverb, and the like. *The amount of echo, reverb, and volume is controlled by processor 210 according to user commands.* Effects generator 250 also mixes the altered voice data with the output from sound module 240 and outputs the mixed sound through audio output port 140, headphone output port 142, and/or a radio frequency transmitter 245." (Col. 5 lines 57-64).

Ng does not explicitly teach a headset comprising a microphone and a headphone in combination with the other elements. Official Notice is taken that the use of a headset, which comprises a microphone and a headphone, in combination with audio equipment or musical instruments is notoriously old and well-known in the art of audio equipment. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to adapt the teachings of Ng with such headset teachings, so as to allow the user the ability to have a hands-free musical performance.

Regarding Claims 7 and 13, Ng (applied here in a similar manner as above) discloses all features recited, but does not explicitly disclose the second microphone / receiving the third audio input as recited. It has been held that the mere duplication of working parts does not constitute nonobviousness (In re Harza, 274 F.2d 669, 124 USPQ 378 (CCPA 1960)). It would have been obvious to modify the teachings of Ng accordingly, so as to allow for more simultaneous users of the Ng device.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey Donels whose telephone number is 571-272-2061. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paula Bradley can be reached on 571-272-2800 ext 37. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Jeffrey Donels

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Primary Examiner
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